

January “Nutrition Connection”

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SMART SNACKING & YOUR SNACK PERSONALITY

It's 3 pm. Time for a snack? I know I do it. I often eat by the clock. I grab something just because it is that “time of the day...” regardless of hunger. Much of our eating behavior could be characterized as an eating “script.” We eat at that time or place because that is what we always do. While I am in support of snacking, and eating every 3-4 hours, I still encourage my clients to listen to their body for hunger cues.

Perhaps an idea for your next short-term health goal is to assess how you can be a “smarter snacker.” The following are characteristics of what I would consider a “smart snacker:”

A SMART SNACKER:

- 1) **Plans ahead of time.** They don't let the vending machine or co-worker (*who was kind enough to leave cookies in the break room*) plan their snack.
- 2) **Identifies the satiating snacks.** Which snacks would you say “stick to your ribs?” Which snacks leave you craving more (ie: chips)? Which ones fill you up just long enough to be slightly hungry before the next meal? For me...the satiating snack is handful of nuts, not a granola bar. It is different for everyone. Pay attention to which snacks do it for you.
- 3) **Chooses whole.** Think apple over apple flavored snack bar, or string cheese over cheese crackers. The fewer the ingredients, the more wholesome and healthier the snack.
- 4) **Eats by hunger, not by the clock.** Just because you always eat a snack at 10 am, does not mean you will always need one. If you can easily make it to noon without getting too hungry, forgo the snack. Perhaps you can do without the 100-200 calories if you are trying to manage your weight.

BENEFITS OF SNACKING

Snacking can help us manage our weight by preventing overeating at meals. If you find yourself rummaging through the cupboards before dinner, perhaps you should have had a more substantial snack closer to that meal time. A satisfying 150 calorie snack at 4:30 pm, might save you 300 calories of mindless snacking before dinner reaches the table.

Snacking maintains an even level of blood sugars over the course of the day which leads to increased productivity, stronger workouts, and a better mood.

IN A SNACK RUT?

Need new snack ideas? Check out some of my favorites and also the recent video segment on the FOX 2 STL Mom's show for snacks tailored to your snacking personality.

[FOX 2 VIDEO: SNACKING PERSONALITY](#)

1. **Hummus Energy Wrap.** Look for a crackers and wraps made with whole grains and fiber. My personal favorite cracker is Ak-Mak & Tumaro's Soy-Full Heart Tortillas. Hummus is also a good source of fiber and comes in several varieties like olive, five spice, and garlic.
4 Tablespoons Hummus + 1 Tortilla : 190 calories
2. **Healthy Mixed Bag** Combine a high fiber cereal, with dried fruit, and a variety of nuts for a high fiber, good fat snack. This snack contains at least 3 food groups!
1/3 cup : 150 calories
3. **Fresh Fruit Parfait.** The classic nutritious-and-convenient food can provide you with 25 percent of your daily calcium requirement, protein, fiber and several other necessary vitamins and minerals. Throw some high-fiber cereal in for extra crunch and fiber.
4. **Apple + Peanutty Dip:** Mix 1 TBSP peanut butter with a little vanilla yogurt, and tsp of honey. Perfect dip for pears or apples.
5. **Winter oatmeal:** ~200 calories. Combine ¼ cup canned pumpkin with ½ cup dry oats and milk or water. Microwave for 2 minutes and drizzle a touch of honey and cinnamon for a comforting winter snack.

For more information regarding eating healthy and other nutrition topics, please contact
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